

LEAP...IMAGINATION IN LEARNING

STORIES IN THE SAND: LEAP'S 26TH ANNUAL SANDCASTLE CONTEST

A RESPONSE TO FUNDING CUTS

Leap, a nonprofit organization based in the San Francisco Bay Area, was established in response to severe cuts in California's arts education funding following the passage of Proposition 13 in 1979.

Over the past 30 years, Leap has worked to fill the dramatic gap in access to arts learning in local schools. In the face of increasing cuts to school budgets, the need for Leap's programs is greater than ever. Most schools continue to lack the resources to provide their students with high quality programs in the arts.

Today, Leap annually serves over 25 schools and 6,500 students across the Bay Area with residencies in architecture, visual art, dance, theatre, creative writing and music.

ANNUAL SANDCASTLE CONTEST

Every fall, *Leap...imagination in learning* orchestrates the spectacular Sandcastle Contest as its major fundraising event. Leap's 26th Annual



Sandcastle Contest came to life at Ocean Beach in San Francisco on October 3rd, 2009. This year's theme, "Stories in the Sand: Classic Children's Books," produced an array of one-of-a-kind sand sculptures inspired by *The Giving Tree*, *Charlotte's Web*, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, *Where the Wild Things Are*, *Alice in Wonderland* and many more.

A stellar lineup of judges participated in this year's event, including Linda Fairchild, Linda Fairchild Contemporary Art, Julie Downing, children's book author, *http*; Daniel Handler (a/k/a Lemony Snicket),

children's book author, and Patti Mitchell, longtime Leap supporter and author of *Sandcastles: Great Projects: From Mermaids to Monuments*. The contest is open to the public, free of charge, and supported by the local

construction industry, including architects, engineers, and contractors who come



together to support arts education in Bay Area schools. This year, 22 teams of professionals joined students from local elementary schools in a collaborative attempt to reshape Mother Nature and to push the limits of creativity. Before the event, architects and builders met with schoolchildren in the classroom to develop ideas based on a set theme. Plans were finalized, clay models were shaped, team structure and schedules were defined, and tasks were assigned, all in preparation for the big day.

The 2009 Sandcastle Contest raised over \$200,000 to support Leap. Funds were raised by the teams and sponsors who participated in the event, often with creative and grassroots fundraising efforts such as benefit concerts



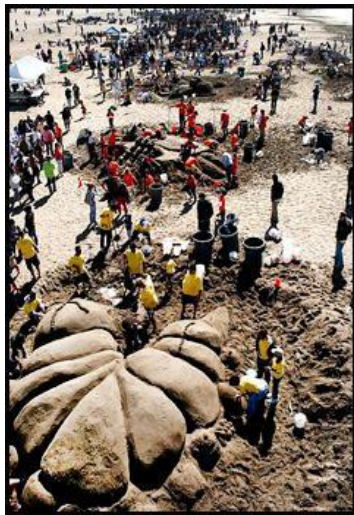
and bake sales. The top two fundraising teams were

california arts council

Butler Armsden Architects/Dijeu Poage Construction/GFDS Engineers, who raised \$38,000 and SmithGroup, Inc/HerreroBoldt/Degenkolb Engineers, who raised \$30,250.

The Sandcastle Contest and other long-time partners such as the California Arts Council have made it possible for Leap to bring programs in art and architecture to Bay Area schools for the past 30 years. The support of the California Arts Council's Artists in Schools program has helped Leap to not only grow its programs to serve more students, but also to be more effective. Current funding from the Artists in Schools program is being used to support two of Leap's residencies in underserved elementary schools in San Francisco. These visual arts projects will enable students to experience creative connections interwoven with curricular topics through creative thinking, collaborative efforts and hands-on activities. A culminating event will present their work to parents, fellow students and teachers. In addition to funding, the California Arts Council has also provided a high level of dedicated support from its staff.

For example, Wayne Cook, Arts Program Specialist for the Artists in Schools program, served on the Judges' Panel of the 2008 Sandcastle Contest. Wayne commented, "I was blown away by the commitment of



students and the architects. They frantically tried to complete their sandcastles before high tide. The participants knew the ocean was about to retake the beach and their temporary public art pieces."

When the event celebrated its 25th anniversary, the judges' panel included key players who have been instrumental in Leap's success, including Trudy Zimmerman, Leap's Founding Director, and

representatives from the San Francisco Arts Commission.

Photos by Cris Benton.

A complete awards list and photos from the Sandcastle Contest, as well as more information on Leap's residency programs in the arts and architecture, can be found online at www.leap4kids.org.

